

MINUTES
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held in the Police Building, 760 Vernon Avenue, Kirby Room
October 1, 2020 at 5:30 pm

Present: Councillor Ned Taylor (Chair), Ted Austin (via telephone), Trevor Barry, Kathleen Burton, Pamela Carroll (via telephone), Lyndsay Edgar (via telephone), Amy-Jade Louie (via telephone), Erin Lumley (via telephone), Stefanie Yao

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Gary Darrah, Manager, Park Planning and Development; Julie Lomerse, Park Planner Designer; Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

Regrets: Dexter Owen

Guest: Susan Haddon, Friends of Cedar Hill Park (via telephone)

Minutes

MOVED by K. Burton and Seconded by T. Barry: "That the Minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held September 3, 2020, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair expressed appreciation to the Friends of Cedar Hill Park for their work in the community and also thanked staff for providing the reports for the meeting. He advised that youth representative, Alabama Chevrier, had to resign from the committee.

FRIENDS OF CEDAR HILL PARK PULLING TOGETHER PROGRAM

Susan Haddon, past Chair of Friends of Cedar Hill Park (FCP), presented historical information about Cedar Hill Park and provided comments about the Cedar Hill Park Draft Management Plan. She extended an invitation for committee members to come walk the park with members of FCP. The following was noted:

- There are Garry Oak ecosystems and environmentally significant areas in the park.
- Both the Colquitz and Bowker Creek watersheds, along with three ponds and Reach 17 of Bowker Creek are part of the park.
- The greater community has cared for the park for over 50 years. The FCP was formed in 2014.
- Regarding the Cedar Hill Park Draft Management Plan, the FCP supports many of the Plan's vision for the park, however a number of the Plan's goals imply development that could impact the park's natural areas.
- It is proposed that Saanich only permit development where it does not negatively impact the ecological value of the park.
- There are possible negative ecosystem impacts with some of the proposed trails, and it is also felt that cycling on the chip trail around the park is also unsafe, with conflicts with cyclists, golfers and pedestrians.

In reply to a question from the committee about the areas of concern in terms of development, Ms. Haddon noted that park draft management plan Goals 5.3 and 8-16 focus on development and include the paths around the park, recreation, play and gathering places, ball diamond upgrades, picnic and seating areas, youth specific areas, washrooms and the possible expansion of the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the presentation and thanked Ms. Haddon for her time.

CEDAR HILL PARK DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Manager of Park Planning and Development and the Park Planner Designer were present to provide information regarding the Cedar Hill Park Draft Management Plan. This is a 20-year plan with prioritized goals, and staff are seeking Committee's support tonight and Council's approval at a meeting later this month. Five goals for environmental management and restoration have been identified, connectivity and mobility in the park is being assessed (and includes active transportation within the park), and new recreation, play and gathering places for all ages and abilities are also included in the plan. The budget estimate for the first five years is about \$960,000 and future budgets are to be determined.

Staff replied to committee questions and the following was noted:

- A Water Resources Engineer (KWL) was hired to look at the feasibility of restoring Bowker Creek and constructing a wetland at Reach 17. Preliminary costs for a project like this are over \$1 million.
- The existing baseball diamonds do not generate much revenue. The plan to create one larger size ball diamond will not negatively impact the users of the two existing smaller diamonds and the space is there for Special Olympics to use the area.
- The Parks division has taken over the management of the public portions of the park from the Cedar Hill Golf Course, who will primarily focus on the active golf course zone.
- In reply to a concern expressed about prioritizing youth amenities, staff noted that every park that has been updated in recent years (eg. McMinn Park, George Tripp, Horner Park, Tolmie Park) has a youth component. In terms of what is planned, there are no specific ideas at this point in time.
- The Plan is just at the concept stage for amenity areas at this point and will have to go through detailed planning and public engagement later.
- There is no proposal to remove any high value natural areas in the park.
- It is too early to do a traffic demand study but it is not anticipated that there will be an increase in parking needs around the recreation centre. The parking will be renewed in an efficient manner and will have better stormwater management.

Motion: MOVED by T. Barry and Seconded by L. Edgar, "That the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends to Council that the Cedar Hill Draft Management Plan be endorsed and that consideration be given to making youth amenities a 1 – 5 year priority within the Plan."

Committee members debated whether it was necessary to prioritize the youth amenities in the Plan, and the following amendment was made:

Motion to Amend: MOVED by K. Burton and Seconded by S. Yao, "That the motion be amended to remove the proviso that youth amenities be made a 1 - 5 year priority within the Plan."

Motion to Amend CARRIED

Main motion as amended:

MOVED by T. Barry and Seconded by L. Edgar, "That the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends to Council that the Cedar Hill Draft Management Plan be endorsed."

Motion as Amended CARRIED

*** T. Barry left the meeting at 7:10 p.m. ***

NATURAL INTELLIGENCE

The Senior Manager of Parks presented information on Natural Intelligence, Foundations of Stewardship, and the following was noted:

- Natural Intelligence was described as what we know about nature and how we interact with it.
- The goal is to have Saanich residents actively enhancing the natural world by 2025 in order to help with challenges of climate change, species/habitat loss, pollution, etc.
- Not one government can address these large issues; everyone needs to become involved with nature.
- A survey was done on Facebook but youth was a missing component; in order to reach more youth staff will look at reaching out on other social media such as Instagram.
- The people that responded to the survey averaged 1-2 hours outside daily. Walking, running, gardening and hiking were the most popular ways to spend time outdoors.
- Staff are looking to put together a campaign to encourage people to get out into nature; more data needs to be collected first.
- An advertisement on CTV Vancouver Island was played for committee members.
- Parks is well positioned to lead this initiative as there is already so much community engagement and partnerships with stewards of the land.

Committee comments:

- Appreciation was expressed for the advertisement on CTV. The Hiking the Island advertisement is well done.
- This is very good timing with COVID-19; it gives people options to get outside and keep active during the pandemic.
- This is a mindful program and can expand in the future.

BRAINSTORMING SESSION – REMAINING ITEMS

This item to be discussed at a future meeting.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Reports from Recreation, Parks, and Community Services were received by committee members in the agenda package. The Manager of Park Planning and Development noted that the Cuthbert Homes Management plan has delayed items because of the highway project. Information will be on the Saanich website regarding this.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Councillor Taylor, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary